

Biweekly Seafood Narrative Report

State of Alaska, Japan Office

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Import Quota for 2001

The Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry (METI) has announced the pollock and kelp import quotas for the year 2001.

Pollock includes live, fresh, chilled, frozen, salted, brine, dried and fish meal. The quantities listed in the import quotas for both pollock and kelp are the same as the previous year.

<u>Pollock</u>	<u>(in tons)</u>
Traders	100,940
Users	63,060
Fishermen	160,000
Overseas seafood development	700,000
First come first serve	3,000
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Total:	1,027,000

<u>Kelp (in tons)</u>	Total (dried):	2,260
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(Nikkan Hokkai Keizai Newspaper, May 3, 2001)

Seafood Imported by Air in March

According to the Tax Bureau of the Ministry of Finance, recent seafood air imports (total) have decreased, though the overall value has risen due to an increase in live fish imports.

- Total imports for March was 13,184 tons, a value of 14,302,885,000 yen - an increase over the previous month (a 1.5% decrease from the same month last year). A depreciating yen increased the overall import value by 1.7%.
- Seafood imports that increased in volume include: live eel, fresh and frozen salmon, squid and live sea urchin.
- Imports of Atlantic salmon continued steady, increasing by 9.0%. Other salmon imports have increased due to the added purchases of Norwegian trout.
- Import prices for fresh Atlantic salmon by country:

Norway	619 yen (674 yen)
England	630 yen (732 yen)
Canada	617 yen (685 yen)
USA	570 yen (---)
Chile	535 yen (711 yen)
Australia	683 yen (838 yen)
New Zealand	1,000 yen (---)

(The amounts in brackets represent prices for the same month last year.)

- Imports of live sea urchin doubled in volume (compared to the same month last year) though fresh, frozen and salted sea urchin imports decreased by 10%.

(Nikkan Hokkai Keizai Newspaper, May 3, 2001)

Questionnaire by Japan Seafood Wholesaler Association

The Japan Seafood Wholesaler Association conducted a questionnaire through the Internet on how fish and fish markets are perceived by the general public. The results were made available from the news release. The fish market was thought to project an image of “liveliness” and was recognized as “an important source of culinary life”. However, it was also found that consumers were not

familiar with the markets. Yaki-zakana (grilled fish) was identified as the most popular fish, and in general, fish was something that is eaten at home.

The nationwide questionnaire attracted 4,528 internet responses. Most of the respondees were 26 to 40 year-old, with a ratio of four men to six women. The questions asked: 1) where fish is purchased, 2) how often fish is eaten, 3) when fish is most frequently eaten, 4) favorite fish dishes, 5) perceptions of fish, 6) what kind of utensils people own for preparing fish, 7) perceptions of the fish market, 8) perceptions of the fish market as expressed in one word (Chinese character).

The answers to the above questions included the following:

- 1) Fish is bought at: supermarkets (60.7%), fish stores or other grocery stores (under 10%), coops and agricultural coops (.9%).
- 2) Fish is eaten: one or two times per week (49.78%), three or four times per week (41.28%).
- 3) Fish is eaten: at home, as a regular dish (52.08%), when eating out, and as a regular dish (35.47%).
- 4) Favorite fish dishes were: yaki-zakana (grilled fish) 30.94%, sashimi (raw fish) 27.96%, cooked fish 19.80%.
- 5) Fish is valued because: it tastes good (21.79%), because it is nutritious (17.06%), it should be a cheaper overall (12.82%).
- 6) Cooking utensils included: ordinary kitchen knives (39.32%), kitchen knives for raw fish (19.12%), wasabi (Japanese horseradish) graters (18.55%).
- 7) Fish markets were seen as: an important source of culinary life (36.65%), as a place that should be opened up to consumers (30.52%).
- 8) Fish markets were described, in a word, as: lively (31.89%), morning (14.86%), and wholesale (10.21%).

(Nikkan Suisan Keizai Newspaper, May 7, 2001)